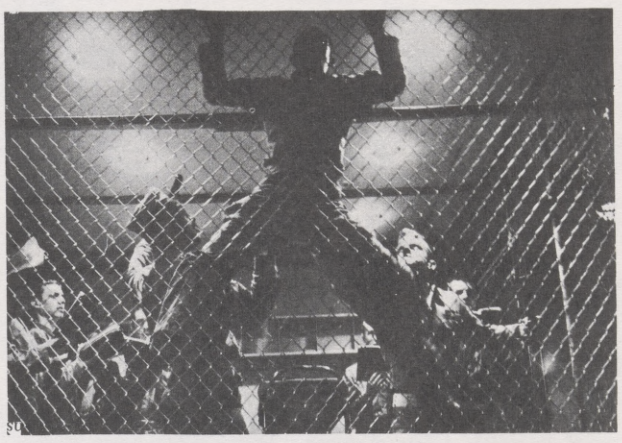
CANYON CINEMATHEQUE '75

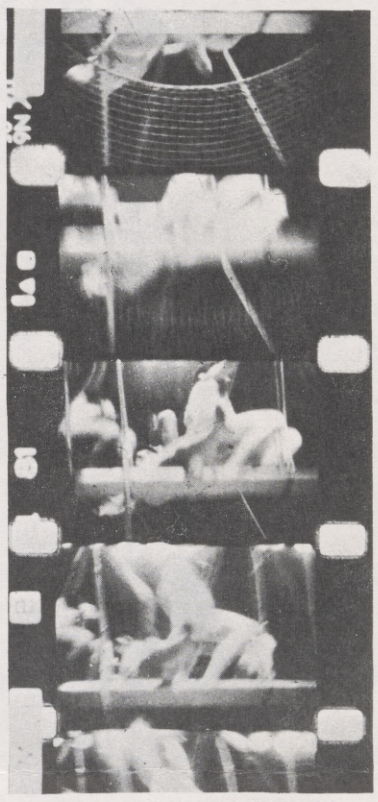
The only regular Bay Area showcase for personal and Avant Garde cinema.

THE CRAVEN SLUCK

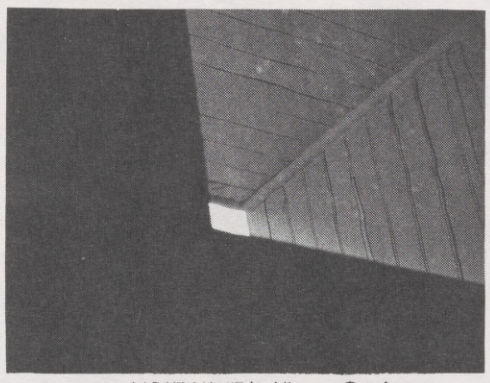
LOONY TOM by James Broughton



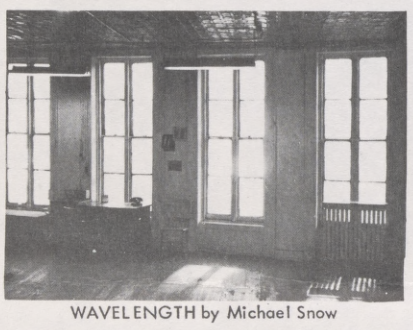
Jonas & Adolfas Mekas' THE BRIG



NOTES ON THE CIRCUS by Jonas Mekas

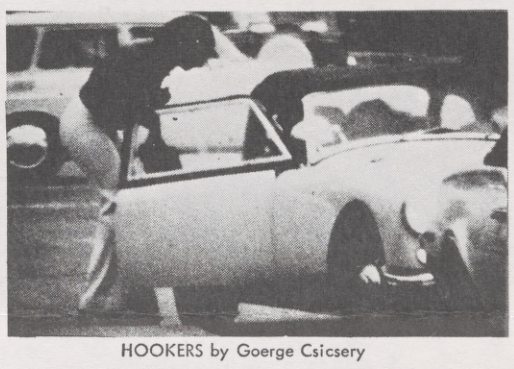


LIGHT SHAFT by Vincent Grenier



WAVELENGTH by Michael Snow

HOOKERS by George Csicsery



HOOKERS by Goerge Csicsery

JUNE 5 THREE FILMS BY MIKE KUCHAR

Mike Kuchar (the younger of the Kuchar twins), since achieving a cult fame on the East Coast (Bronx), now graces the West Coast where he continues to influence a new generation of film-makers and film viewers and is one whose films audiences demand to see over and over. All three of these films are personal statements and reflect the frustrations, joys, problems, and humor (familial and romantic) in Kuchar New York in the 60's. This is social satire bleak, black, ridiculous, and hilarious.

THE CRAVEN SLUCK (1967) 22 min.
TALES OF THE BRONX (1970) 16 min.
SINS OF THE FLESHAPOIDS (1965) 50 min.

JUNE 12 SEVEN BY FOUR

The seven films in this show use limited means to achieve unlimited ends, and they give the audience the opportunity to go beyond each film's somewhat simple surface and uncover a complex interior.

THE ADORATION OF SUZIE by Walter Guttman (16 min.)
L.A. CARWASH by Janis Lipzen (1975) 10 min.
PARASPHERE by Joel Singer (1975) 14 min.
ADIEU BEAUSE JOUR by Joel Singer (3 min.)
CATCH by Vincent Grenier (1975) 5 min.
LIGHT SHAFT by Vincent Grenier (1975) 15 min.
SHADE by Vincent Grenier (1975) 16 min.

"In these films I am attempting to investigate and correlate the qualities and and potentials of both the controls of the camera and the filmed object, with my own intuitive movements. In "SHADE," the shade moved by the wind becomes a changing diaphragm that is put in confrontation with the diaphragm of the lens that I control. The same thing happens with the focus. In "LIGHT SHAFT," adequately positioning the tripod will cause a piece of sky to change form when panning the camera. In "CATCH," the photographic tripod permits jerky pans that are juxtaposed with rapid shots of other kinds of movements." --Vincent Grenier

JUNE 19 "CARRIAGE TRADE" BY WARREN SONBERT

WITH WARREN SONBERT IN PERSON!

Warren Sonbert's films have been well-received by audiences and critics since he began in 1966 with AMPHETAMINE and WHERE DID OUR LOVE GO?. CARRIAGE TRADE is a grand tour of the world with dazzling glances of people and places in Europe, Africa, India, and the U.S., edited not necessarily chronologically but rather according to the flow and contrast between shots. Sonbert has used various metaphors to describe his film: "Film as music without music, each shot a cluster of notes riking a reaction in the viewer....a jigsaw puzzle of postcards....all to pull the carpet from under you." Ken Jacobs has called it "a masterpiece," and Jonas Mekas has written, "It will remain in the history of cinema together with all the other great works of film art." A definite feast for the eyes. (1968-73)

JUNE 26 "WAVELENGTH" BY MICHAEL SNOW

(1966-67) 45 min.

"The film is a continuous zoom which takes 45 minutes to go from its widest field to its smallest and final field. It was shot with a fixed camera from one end of an 80 foot loft, shooting the other end, a row of windows and the street. This, the setting, and the action which takes place there are cosmically equivalent. The room (and the zoom) are interrupted by 4 human events including a death. The sound on these occasions is sync sound, music and speech, occuring simultaneously with an electronic sound, a sine wave, which goes from its lowest (50 cycles per second) note to its highest (12000 c.p.s.) in 40 minutes. It is a total glissando while the film is a crescendo and a dispersed spectrum which attempts to utilize the gifts of both prophecy and memory which only film and music have to offer."
--Michael Snow

"One of the truly original works of the current avant-garde, a perfect example of the cinema of stillness and poetic contemplation weaving its hypnotic charms so deviously that many who come to scoff remain to be transfixed. WAVELENGTH is one of those few films that compel the viewer regardless of his personal reactions to specultate on the very essence of the medium and, inevitably, of reality." Amos Vogel

Also:

T.O.U.C.H.I.N.G. by Paul Sharits (1968) 12 min.
DIPLOTERATOLOGY OR BARDO FOLLIES
by George Landow (1967) 20 min.

THURSDAYS 8:30 PM at the SAN FRANCISCO ART INSTITUTE
800 Chestnut St. DOOR $1.75 For information call 332-1514
FREE COFFEE

Since its beginning in the early sixties, Canyon Cinematheque has reflected the ever-broadening landscape of American independent cinema. In this short time there has appeared a number of films (and film-makers) which could be considered as permanent fixtures upon this landscape. We propose this summer to be a time of viewing some of these fixtures. For the most part the summer fare will include films which for various reasons demand to be seen again and again.

JULY 3 "THE BRIG" BY JONAS & ADOLFAS MEKAS

(1964) 68 min.

CASSIS by Jonas Mekas (4 1/2 min.)

NOTES ON THE CIRCUS by Jonas Mekas (1966) 12 min.

Sometime during the winter of '63-4 in the wee hours of the morning, so the legend goes, the Mekas brothers along with Julian Beck and the cast of the Living Theater committed the crime of trespassing in order to stage and film one last performance of Kenneth Brown's play THE BRIG. The Living Theater, beset by financial difficulties and unable to pay rent and taxes, was forced out of its off-Broadway quarters & therefore unable to continue performances. The result of this conspiracy was a film of such incredible power that many people upon first viewing cannot believe that the film they are watching is a documentary of a play and not a documentary of life in a Marine Corps brig. So real and brutal does this seem that one has difficulty believing that actors could be found who would be willing to subject themselves to this kind of brutality night after night. In fact the legend goes further: that the actors changed roles each night and any actor who missed a cue had the following night to play the part of the prisoner who gets put in the garbage can which is then repeatedly banged upon by another prisoner. But the fact remains that Brothers Mekas have through their camera work and editing transformed a play into a film in its own right far more successfully than any of Hollywood's attempts at same.

JULY 10 JAMES BROUGHTON: SIX FILMS

James Broughton is amazing; he's a poet and a philosopher and every film he makes makes us more aware of that fact as he seems to possess an energy which knows no bounds. And with each new film his poet/philosopher's light grows brighter and gives us a larger space in which to view his earlier work, which remains as fresh today as it was in the forties, fifties, and sixties. This program spans some twenty-three years, and as varied as these films are in terms of structure and image there seem to run the various threads of poetry, pageantry, joy in the moment, and the recognition of life as a continuous flow of drama and ecstasies without bounds.

LOONY TOM
A slapstick comedy in the tradition of Sennett but with a sense of movement and editing unheard of in Sennett's time. 10 min. (1951)

FOUR IN THE AFTERNOON
"Four poetic variations on the search for love....Based on Broughton's own poems, this film blends image, music, and verse in moods from farcical to elegiac. With Ann Halprin and Welland Lathrop. Music by William O. Smith." --J.B. (1951) 10 min.

THE PLEASURE GARDEN
Made in London with a professional cast and shot in the ruined gardens of the Crystal Palace. This is a "joyous musical fantasy celebrating Love in the Park and the victory of the pleasure principle over all the prudes and killjoys." --J.B. 38 min. (1953)

NUPTIAE
Filmed by Stan Brakhage at the Broughton's wedding, it "celebrates weddings and being wed, and the Union of Opposites in everything everywhere. It is my alchemical testament to the mystery of Yang and Yin." --J.B. 14 min. (1969)

THIS IS IT
This is the infant Adam filmed in the garden of Eden as he explores each infinite joy and delight of every magic moment of his existence. "This is it/ This is really it/ This is all there is/ and it's perfect as it is." 10 min. (1971)

HIGH KUKUS
This is Broughton's most ambitious and perfect use of poetry in film. This film is deceptively simple as there is an entire universe in this walden pond against which Broughton's voice recites nonsensical haikus, his most "profound nonsense" yet. 3 min. (1973)

JULY 17 THREE UNDERGROUND DOCUMENTARIES

What makes these three films underground more than anything else is their subject matter, as each of these films contains footage which makes them impossible to project at your P.T.A. luncheon or your church study group.

HOOKERS by George Csicsery

Filmed in collaboration with Margo St. James and members of Coyote: a loose women's organization. "Shot partly at the 1974 Halloween ball that Coyote hosted, partly during meetings between Margo St. James, chairmadam of Coyote, and interested women. It is done in semi-documentary style, not salacious, and it shows the way in which enlightened, self-employed women go about the business of pleasing men--on the streets, in posh salons, and even in the boudoir of a disciplinarian....A major desire on the part of Coyote and the film-makers is to dispel the idea that hookers are for last-resort frantic sex. The whole effect is to humanize the women."
--Sam Silver

A FILM ABOUT SHARON by Barry Spinello

A documentary study on the life, thoughts, and work of a leading actress in in pornographic films. Sharon Thorpe discusses her views on sexuality and women's liberation. Visually this film explores rather explicitly the different aspects of her sexuality and her work-a-day world.

COCK FIGHTING by Jerry Barrish

This is a rather remarkable first film by a Bay Area film-maker; as its name suggests this film is about cock fighting. A rather economical film which takes the viewer through the breeding, egg selection, raising, and training of the specialized stock of fighting birds used in this underground sport. This film is being shown last because it shows explicit scenes of cocks killing each other and some members of the audience are likely to want to leave when they are confronted with this spectacle.

JULY 24 STAN BRAKHAGE:

THE BOOK OF THE FILM, Chapter 1 (1967-70), being:
SCENES FROM UNDER CHILDHOOD, parts 1-4

"A visualization of the inner world of foetal beginnings, the infant, the baby, the child--a shattering of the 'myths of childhood' through revelation of the extremes of violent terror and overwhelming joy of that world darkened to most adults by their sentimental remembering of it...a 'tone poem' for the eye--very inspired by the music of Oliver Messiaen."
--Stan Brakhage 2 hr. 18 min.

JULY 31 STAN BRAKHAGE:

THE BOOK OF THE FILM, Chapter 2 (1970), being:
THE WEIR-FALCON SAGA
THE MACHINE OF EDEN
THE ANIMALS OF EDEN AND AFTER

"The term THE WEIR-FALCON SAGA appeared to me, night after night, at the end of each of a series of dreams: I was 'true' to the feeling, tho' not the images, of the dreams in the editing of this and the following two films. The three films 'go' very directly together, in the (above) order of their making: yet each seems to be a clear film in itself....these 'Weir-Falcon' films occur to me as distinct from any film-making I have done before. They engender, in me, entirely 'new' considerations. I cannot describe them: but there is an excerpt from "The Spoils," by Basil Bunting, which raises hair on the back of my neck similiarly:

"Have you seen a falcon stoop/accurate, unforseen/ and absolute, between/ wind-ripples over harvest? Dead/ of what's to be, is and has been--/ were we not better dead?/ His wings churn air/ to flight./ Feathers alight/ with sun, he rises where/ dazzle rebuts our stare,/wonder our fright."' --Stan Brakhage 1 hr. 15 min.

Also:

THE HORSEMAN, THE WOMAN, AND THE MOTH (1968)

"A long myth drawn directly onto the film's surface, which is painted, dyed, treated so that it will grow controlled crystals and mold--as textures of the figures and forms of the drama--, some images stamped thru melted wax crayon techniques, some images actual objects (such as moth wings) collaged directly on the celluloid...so that the protagonists of this myth (as listed in the title) weave thru crystalline structures and organic jungles of the colorful world of hypnogogic vision--edited into 'themes and variations' that tell 'a thousand and one' stories while, at the same time, evoking Baroque music...the primary musical inspiration being the harpsichord Sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti." --Stan Brakhage 19 min.